



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
APPROVED MINUTES
Thursday, March 2, 2017
Florence Ely Nelson Desert Park
8950 E. Pinnacle Peak Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85255**

PRESENT: Bob Frost, Chair; Mike Milillo, Vice Chair; Commissioners Bobby Alpert, Steve Dodd, Con Englehorn, Jace McKeighan, and Cynthia Wenstrom

STAFF: Bill Murphy, Director of Community Services; Kroy Ekblaw, Preserve Director; Scott Hamilton, Trails Planner; Natural Resources Coordinators Yvonne Massman, Robert Graves, and John Loleit

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Frost called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present as noted above.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT (Discussion begins at 5:02; approximately 2 minutes into the meeting)

Fred Leeder, representing Sonoran Heights HOA, spoke in opposition to the Cactus Path, which is in planning stages in the Transportation Department. He expressed concern that the Transportation Department is planning to extend the 12-foot concrete path into the protected Preserve land from 127th Street to 128th Street. He posed several questions to the Commission and distributed copies of his written statement and questions to the Commission.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Discussion begins at 5:04)

Commissioner McKeighan suggested that the third paragraph under Item 6, Trail Updates, where it says "a group of hikers walking in the lower section of E," be changed to "members of the working group."

COMMISSIONER MILILLO MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 2, 2017 MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AS AMENDED. COMMISSIONER WENSTROM SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY A UNANIMOUS VOTE OF SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0).

5. MCDOWELL SONORAN CONSERVANCY UPDATE

There was no update.

6. WILDLIFE REPORT (Discussion begins at 5:05)

Mr. Hamilton introduced Curtis Herbert, Tim Holt, and Scott Sprague from Arizona Game and Fish. He said that their presentation is a continuation of the annual review of wildlife in the Preserve.

Curtis Herbert noted that annual surveys of deer and javelina populations in the Preserve are conducted under the agreement between Game and Fish and the City of Scottsdale that was initiated in 2013 for a five-year period. He explained the process of collecting raw data and reviewed the population estimates for each species. The wildlife study has provided a base of population data and the analysis found the populations to be stable and self-sustaining, given the current habitat value and harvest opportunity. Efforts are under way to develop an agreement for the continued monitoring of deer and javelina populations through the renewal of the wildlife study agreement.

Commission members were given an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Herbert explained that the buck to doe ratio can be stable as long as it stays within the guidelines. The fawn to doe ratio is next year's buck to doe ratio; hunting opportunities will be based on those ratios. Studies of bow hunting success rates indicate 6% of bow hunters are successful.

Scott Sprague reviewed the aerial research project explaining how individual mule deer movements are recorded using GPS to record eight points each day. In February of 2016, 32 collars were deployed.

Commission members were given an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Sprague said that seven of the collars have been recovered and six were able to be redeployed in February 2017. Four of the collars went to the gooseneck area in an effort to achieve a better understanding of deer movement in the central/gooseneck area, in order to see if this is a high use area. Once in the analysis stage, the data can be used to project likely annual movements of the general deer population.

7. BY-LAWS AMENDMENT (Discussion begins at 5:22)

Mr. Ekblaw briefly reviewed the possible amendment to section 2.01 of the By-Laws, based on the Commission's request in February to consider removing July and December from the Commission's regular meeting schedule.

COMMISSIONER MCKEIGHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE BY-LAWS AMENDMENT. COMMISSIONER WENSTROM SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY A UNANIMOUS VOTE OF SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0).

8. PROMOTION/MARKETING UPDATE (Discussion begins at 5:24)

Mr. Murphy gave an update on the progress towards the promotional goals to educate and inform the community, targeting youth, seniors, recreational groups, and visitors about the Preserve and foster communication with the stewardship of the natural environment. He noted that Community Services brochure provided free advertisement and Title I schoolchildren and

Mountain View After-School programs were taken on field trips. The Conservancy will host Junior Citizen Science Day at Lost Dog on March 10, 2017. Experience Scottsdale has published a new hiking and trail guide, which is also available online and has had 1,831 downloads since October. The results of the Nation Citizen Survey comparing 2010 to 2016 were provided to the Commission. Views of the Preserve page on the City's website have risen approximately 31 percent.

9. TRAILHEAD PLANNING UPDATES (Discussion begins at 5:33)

- Tom's Thumb
- Granite
- Fraesfield
- Pima and Dynamite

Mr. Ekblaw noted that the architects are working on the design for the Fraesfield and Granite sites and the Master Plans are expected to begin going through the public process in the next couple of months with an anticipated Council action in the Fall.

Tom's Thumb Trailhead parking design analysis is underway and is targeting to start the construction in late summer/early fall with the goal of opening for the 2017-18 season.

The architects working on Pima and Dynamite had their first planning meeting. The plans should come forward shortly following the Fraesfield and Granite Master Plans. The old yard will be a high priority target for improvements and the power line corridor/substation. Mr. Ekblaw highlighted the areas that APS will be extending the 69kv power poles. The APS disturbance areas are being considered as a temporary trailhead to alleviate parking concerns in the Legend Trail area and Pima Road north of Dixileta and there will be a median break along Dynamite. More details will come forward as they become available.

Commission members were given an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Ekblaw said that an existing temporary construction storage yard has been at the 126th Street and Dynamite site for over 10 years. Alternatives for relocation of the storage area will be identified in the Master Plan for the Pima Dynamite TH.

Chair Frost asked that a field trip be scheduled to walk the area again once the proposed Master Plan is completed.

Commissioner Milillo stressed the importance of storing materials in a sensitive manner.

10. TRAIL UPDATES (Discussion begins at 5:40)

- Phase 3 area

Mr. Ekblaw gave an update on the progress of the Phase 3 area including Corridors J and G, and discussed solutions for the parking concerns. Staff is working with the Transportation Department and the Police Department to develop a plan for installing signs to address parking concerns. The Legend Trail Community Master Association has also requested that the pullout area be removed, which, if feasible, would be done with Transportation funding. Additional information on the final trail proposals will come forward as they are completed. The Western Express Old Trail in the northern area has been completed and the southern portion is expected to be completed in the next few weeks. A test section and evaluation within the B, C, D area is

expected to be completed in spring/summer/fall of this year. Design work on the Pima/Dynamite trailhead will be coordinated with the A, B, C, D, F area, which Mr. Ekblaw noted is a unique area in that it has a lot of bolder outcrops.

- Tom's Thumb/East End area

Mr. Hamilton gave a presentation on the progress of the Tom's Thumb Trail and the East End area signage and trails. He showed photographs of the new gabion blankets and described how they work, noting that plants will eventually cover the area. He talked about options for rerouting Tom's Thumb Spur and signing the area with signs identifying Tom's Thumb and relevant information on the geology. Carsonite posts will be used to block off side spur routes.

- Brown's Ranch Road and Power lines area

Mr. Hamilton said that Brown's Ranch Road drainage work has been completed. He discussed the idea of creating a route parallel to the power line road off of Brown's Ranch Road into the northeastern area around Cholla Mountain and Granite Mountain.

Mr. Ekblaw reminded the Commission that this summer that APS will begin construction of a new above ground 69kv line in the corridor from Pima and Dynamite to 118th Street. Clearing of vegetation and improvement of the road and spur roads will begin in summer, drilling for footings and setting of poles is planned for late summer, and lines are expected to be strung in October.

Commission members were given an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Ekblaw explained that the City has an existing SLUP with the State Land Department in the area of G identified for a trail easement. At the time the property is developed a trail easement will be placed over the area. He explained that the purpose of signing no parking areas near Legend Trail Community is to discourage parking in those areas where parking could encroach on the bike lane and extend into the drive lane.

11. STAFF REPORTS (Discussion begins at 6:05; approximately 1 hour and 5 minutes into the meeting)

- Central Area Update/activities – Tom's Thumb airlift

Ms. Massman gave an update on the Tom's Thumb airlift conducted on February 22, 2017. Teams worked for 12 hours and moved 100,000 pounds of rock, 100 sets of gabion baskets, bags of concrete, trail signs, and pizza. Trail improvement funds paid for the airlift project.

- APS

There was no further discussion regarding the APS power line project.

12. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS (Discussion begins at 6:13)

Commissioner Englehorn asked about the status of the City's agreement with Arizona Game and Fish. Mr. Hamilton said that staff is in the process of drafting a new IGA and hopes to agree to a term longer than five years.

13. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS (Discussion begins at 6:14)

Financial Report/Endowment Update
Desert Discovery Center
Commercial Use Policy

Commissioners requested to agendaize discussions on Preserve host and trailhead extension. Mr. Ekblaw noted that an update on the Desert Discovery Center is expected to be agendaized for the May meeting.

14. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

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